



Chota – Cherokee town



Chota was one of the most important Cherokee villages from the 1740s until 1788. Much of what we know about Cherokee in the 1700s comes from the writing of Henry Timberlake, a British soldier who lived with the Cherokee for about 3 months in 1761 and 1762. He wrote about many important aspects of their life including

agricultural and hunting habits, religious beliefs, birth and death rites, and marital habits, how the government ran and their method of warfare. He also described everyday items such as canoes, summer houses, winter houses and the councilhouse, the town's main meeting site.

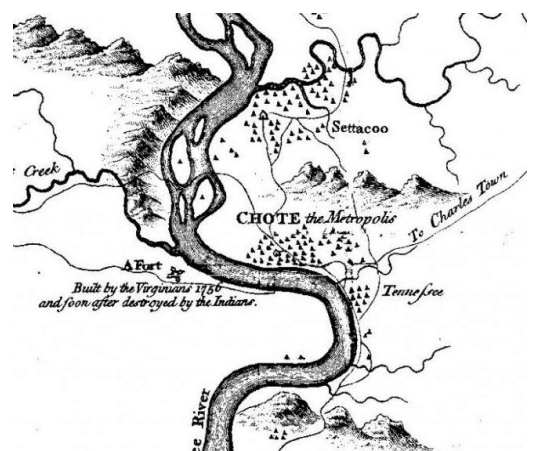
Located along the Little Tennessee River, most of the Chota site was flood in 1979 with the building of the Tellico Reservoir. Before the flooding archaeological digs were conducted. The archaeologist located the councilhouse and a memorial has been erected at that location.

Point it out on a map.



Explain how it was discovered.

- When Henry Timberlake visited the Cherokee he drew a very detailed map of all the Cherokee towns, including Chota
- In 1788 the Cherokee capitol moves from Chota and a few years later only five families live there.



Part of Timberlakes map showing Chota's location (spelled Chote).



Describe some of the information from the past that has been found at the site.

- The archaeology discovered the size and location of houses and the councilhouse.
- Thousands of recovered artifacts showed what everyday life was like in Chota. Some of the recovered artifacts include broken clay pots, iron hoes, metal jewelry, metal parts of muskets, parts of a pipe and beads.
- Many graves were also located, including one that was identified as the grave of the Cherokee leader Oconostota. They knew it was his grave because they found a pair by the wire rim glasses. The remains were relocated and reburied.



Metal armband.



Beads.



The metal lock part of a musket.

Explain how the information gained from the study of this sites answers questions that archaeologists are asking.

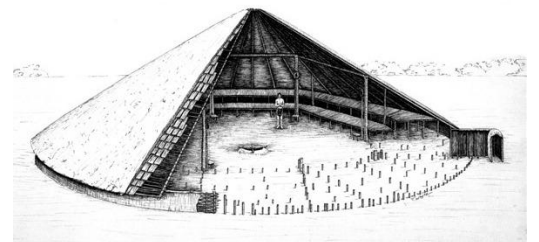
- The flooding of the site was going to destroy it, so the archaeology was done before the reservoir was completed.
- The archaeologist learned about everyday life of the Cherokees from the artifacts.



Part of a broken clay pot.

Explain how the information may be important for modern people.

- At this period of time (1740s to 1788) the Cherokee did not have a written language. Artifacts can tell people about the everyday lives of the Cherokee. Many of the artifacts are on display.
- The Chota Memorial is open to the public and marks the size and location of the councilhouse. It is managed by the Eastern Band of the Cherokee.



An illustration of the councilhouse at Chota. The archaeology located where this stood. The Chota Memorial (pictured at the top of this flyer) is built on the same spot where the councilhouse stood and has the same dimensions as the original councilhouse..

To learn more:

Eastern Band of Cherokee: nc-chokeee.com/

Museum of the Cherokee: www.cherokeemuseum.org/

University of Knoxville, Frank H. McClung Museum: mcclungmuseum.utk.edu/

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